

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Nikki Bufford called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilmembers David M. Viafore, Brett L. Wittner, Hunter T. George, and Joe Barrentine were present.

Councilmember Shannon Reynolds attended the meeting virtually.

Councilmember Karen Mauer-Smith was absent and excused.

PRESIDING OFFICER’S REPORT

A. Proclamation: Robotics Day

Mayor Bufford read the proclamation titled Robotics Day into the record. **Councilmember Viafore MOVED to authorize the Mayor’s signature on the proclamation proclaiming February 21, 2026, as Robotics Day in the City of Fircrest; seconded by Councilmember Wittner.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment. Councilmember Wittner welcomed the robotics group and thanked them for their return. Mayor Bufford invited public comment. Representatives from the SodaBots Robotics Team expressed their appreciation to the City of Fircrest for its continued support and invited the Council and community to attend the Robotics Expo on February 21, 2026, at the Roy H. Murphy Community Center. Councilmember George congratulated the students and expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming event.

The Motion Carried (6-0).

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

City Manager Masko reported that she recently served as a guest speaker at the Rotary Club meeting, providing an update on current City activities and strengthening collaboration. She stated that representatives of the Whittier Elementary School Replacement Project will provide an update at the February 17, 2026, Council Study Session, and that staff is coordinating with the Hearing Examiner to schedule a hearing, anticipated for late March. She reported that City offices and the Community Center will be closed on February 16, 2026, in observance of Presidents' Day, and announced that she will be out of the office on Thursday and Friday. Parks and Recreation Director Jeff Grover will serve as Acting City Manager during her absence.

There was a brief discussion confirming that the Hearing Examiner proceeding is anticipated to be held in person in the Council Chambers.

DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS

- Police Chief Celis provided a departmental update to include calls for service, ARIDE certification, and patrol tactics training. He also provided an update on the newly purchased patrol vehicles and stated that the department is coordinating with the Oak Harbor Police Department regarding the potential purchase of two 2016 vehicles.
- Public Works Director Bemis reported that staff is finalizing plans and specifications for the Regents Boulevard Grind and Overlay Project, which includes removing the existing traffic island and relocating the entrance sign to accommodate bike lanes. He is coordinating with the Fircrest Golf Club on minor fence adjustments and anticipates the project will go out to bid within four to six weeks. Lastly, Director Bemis reported on improvements at the Russo Pavilion and that the Public Works’ Bobcat has been listed for sale. There was a brief discussion on the

removal of the existing island to improve traffic flow, and that updated design options will be brought back to the Council prior to bid advertisement.

- Finance Director Deskins reported that the department is nearing completion of the year-end financial close-out and stated that she met with Columbia Bank representatives to discuss the City’s banking needs and partnership opportunities.

COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS

- Councilmember Viafore; no comment.
- Councilmember Reynolds reported that she will provide an update on the Pierce Transit Board under Liaison Reports.
- Councilmember Wittner; no comment.
- Councilmember George commented on the upcoming Seahawks Parade and encouraged attendees to utilize public transportation.
- Councilmember Barrentine thanked Public Works staff for their prompt response regarding a water leak at a residence. He also requested that staff explore the feasibility of posting Council meeting recordings on YouTube to increase public accessibility. Lastly, he provided information about Maritime 253.
- Mayor Bufford reported that she is working with the City Manager to establish a Council Study Committee on Pedestrian Safety. She stated that the item will be brought forward for Council consideration at the next regular meeting. Mayor Bufford provided information about a Black History Month celebration scheduled for February 28, 2026, at the Roy H. Murphy Community Center. There was a brief discussion of the intent of the Pedestrian Safety Committee and of avoiding duplication of efforts.

PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Mayor Bufford invited public comment. The following individual provided comment.

- Vince Navarre, Fircrest resident, expressed concerns regarding a recent public social media post made by the Mayor.

COMMITTEE, COMMISSION, AND LIAISON REPORTS

A. Administration

There was no report.

B. Built Environmental, Planning, and Building

Councilmember Wittner reported that Planning and Building operations continue to proceed well, despite current staffing limitations.

C. Finance and Information Technology

Councilmember Barrentine reported that the Auditor’s exit conference is scheduled for February 12, 2026, and reminded Councilmembers that if a quorum plans to attend, advance notice must be provided to allow for proper public notice.

D. Other Liaison Reports

Councilmember Reynolds reported that the Pierce Transit Board met and discussed the agency’s strategic plan for the upcoming year, parade route planning, and operational resources. She also reported on the initiation of an executive search process.

Councilmember George reported on the South Sound Housing Affordability Partners and stated that he forwarded the weekly legislative update to Council and staff. He encouraged the Council to review the legislative update for additional information.

There was a brief discussion on the Pierce Transit Board appointment discussion, and that there was no intention of bringing the item forward again.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Mayor Bufford requested that the City Clerk read the Consent Calendar:

- A. Approval of Check No. 224073 through No. 224145 in the amount of \$569,922.31
Approval of Check No. 14573 through No. 14574 in the amount of \$9,676.23
Approval of Check No. 14575 through No. 14582 in the amount of \$83,934.83
Approval of payroll electronic funds transfer in the amount of \$175,760.46
- B. Registering no objections to the Ark Institute of Learning Special Liquor License Application
- C. Approval of January 27, 2026, Regular Meeting minutes

Councilmember Wittner MOVED to approve the Consent Calendar as read; seconded by Councilmember Barrentine.

The Motion Carried (6-0).

PUBLIC HEARING

There was no public hearing scheduled.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Ordinance No. 1755: Solid Waste Rate Adjustment

City Manager Masko briefed the Council on the proposed ordinance setting new solid waste rates due to adjustments to the disposal fee, the annual CPI adjustment, and the recycling commodity surcharge. **Councilmember Wittner MOVED to adopt Ordinance No. 1755, amending Section 1 of Ordinance No. 1736 and Fircrest Municipal Code 6.08.130 relating to the schedule of rates and charges for solid waste collection; seconded by Councilmember Barrentine.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comments; there were none. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; there were none.

The Motion Carried (6-0).

NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution No. 2014: Alameda Avenue West Sidewalk Project Construction Management

Public Works Director Bemis briefed the Council on the proposed resolution and highlighted that services will include project management, construction observation, inspection, and contract administration throughout the construction phase of the project. **Councilmember George MOVED to adopt Resolution No. 2014, authorizing the City Manager to execute a Professional Services Agreement with Psomas for construction management services for the Alameda Avenue West**

Sidewalk Project; seconded by Councilmember Wittner. Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment. There was a brief discussion on the project schedule, and that work is expected to begin in mid-February. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; there were none.

The Motion Carried (6-0).

CALL FOR FINAL COMMENTS

There were none.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. To discuss Labor Negotiations, pursuant to RCW 42.30.140(4)(b)

At 7:40 P.M., Mayor Bufford reported that the Council would take a five-minute recess and convene into Executive Session, not to exceed fifteen (15) minutes, to discuss labor negotiations, pursuant to RCW 42.30.140(4)(b). Mayor Bufford noted that City Manager Masko was invited to the Executive Session.

At 8:00 P.M., Mayor Bufford reported that the Council would extend their executive session for an additional ten (10) minutes.

The Council reconvened at 8:10 P.M. Councilmember Reynolds left the meeting at 8:10 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Barrentine MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Wittner.

The Motion Carried (5-0).



Nikki Bufford, Mayor



Arlette Burkhart, City Clerk